

Snead August 2018 Reunion Sermon

Like His Master

I'd like to start this message with a bit of scripture, so please hear the word of God:

MARK 12: 41-44 Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. 42 Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. 43 So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; 44 for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood."

James 2:14-17 What good is it my brothers if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them "go in peace, and be warmed and filled" without giving them the things need for the body what good is that? So faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

This Snead story I'm about to tell comes from my line of this wonderful and wonderfully large family. My great-grandfather, Nash Perkins Snead, died when I was three, so my siblings and I do not have well developed memories of him. The things I know about him were told to me by my mother and others in the family. He was a farmer, but also a country doctor, and I remember when Cartersville Baptist Church erected a monument to his memory - it's still in front of the church, as is the monument out front here to his father, Dr. and Rev. George Holman Snead, Jr. Personally, I remember "Papa" Snead mostly because of this photo Frank has of him, seated in his office chair with his little Pomeranian Nipper, but also Frank has said that he can remember him as the man sitting at the head of that great dining room table at meal times, where he was the one who prayed.

What I know of my great-grandfather tells me that he was pretty good at both praying and doing things. My mother liked to tell - from when she was quite young - of him returning home from a house call - back when doctors did that - and being asked by his wife and business manager - "Mama Snead" to the rest of us - how much to charge for his visit.

"Don't send her a bill," he replied. "She doesn't have any money to pay it."

Mom also recalled that he frequently came home with eggs, produce and just about anything else of a little value as payment when the patient was poor. I think a lot of the more memorable providers of goods and services in those days did that, realizing, as with Jesus' story of the Widow's Mite, these people

weren't paying the amount expected of those with more substantial means, but they may well have been paying even more, as a percentage of their resources.

That, my friends, brothers and sisters, is a lesson our world seems to have forgotten, and with its loss, we all are poorer in the way that really matters, the way that doesn't involve dollars. In today's world we're taught that we deserve the good life. Master card tells us that to get our money! I doubt that Mama Snead or Papa Snead would have bought things that they couldn't afford because they felt that they deserved them.

The monument that the folks at Cartersville Baptist Church erected to Papa Snead's memory says, on one side, "Like his master, he went about doing good." Papa Snead's faith in God created in him a desire to obey Gods word and minister to others.

You don't get a legacy sentiment like that by asking for it. You get it by deserving it through a life of servanthood. For the works of a person reflect their heart.

Jesus told us that when we serve those in need we are truly serving Him. When he preached about loving your neighbor, a lawyer asked him, Who is my neighbor? But Jesus answered with the parable of the Good Samaritan and ended with, You go and do likewise.

I'll bet that all of you could think of a Snead or two - or more - who could share Papa Snead's inscription of Like his master he went about doing good. Sure, we like to joke about the way Aunt So-and-So used to do this or Uncle What's-His-Name had those quirky habits - the Snead family did not and does not want for characters . . . but it has plenty of character as well. I'm certain that we could come up with a pretty good list of Sneads who, like Nash Perkins Snead obeyed their Master by serving others.

I know we can think of members of the clergy, of those who have honorably served their country in uniform, of members of the critical professions, and a lot with no profession at all whose obedience to God and service to others is obvious.

Livelihood, education, family status, location - none of that really matters, because a person can be in any situation, and if you love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength, and if you love your neighbor as yourself, then you're headed in the right direction.

There is a story of a priest who had gone to Calcutta to conduct a retreat for the nuns in Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity, and Mother Teresa was giving him a tour of her neighborhood in Calcutta, which wasn't picture

perfect. She ministered to the poorest of the poor, and her order's location reflected where they could be found. So they're walking along this street, and there's a low wall alongside at one point, and they look over the wall, and there is a man, dying. It was a death that, to a refined Westerner, was horrible beyond comprehension, and the priest backed away in shock. Mother Teresa pulled him back. "Look closer," she said, "and see the face of Jesus."

"as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me."

How would you greet the person next to you if you believed that that person was made in the image of God? Even if that person was your enemy, or was in some way repugnant to you. My sense is that one of the reasons we're here today is that we knew and know Sneads who figured that one out.

So I think it's fitting for this service - in a church that's pretty much one with our family - to take away today the thoughts about ancestors or those still living who lived and are living the life that Jesus Christ calls us to live and then for us to dedicate just a little more time in our lives to be true servants.

Some people might say that this idea of obedience and servanthood is old fashioned thinking. And it is, way back to the early first century AD. Our fulfillment comes from serving the God who created us. So let's try to be like our old fashioned Snead ancestors, serve others and go about doing good.

We're called to do that, not for any reward, but because it's the right thing to do, and in many of those who came before us and who stand around us, it's also been exemplified for us in them. Let us do so as well.